

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

## **Videotaped Remarks on the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day**

*April 13, 2010*

Forty-one years ago, in the city of Cleveland, people watched in horror as the Cuyahoga River, choked with debris and covered in oil, caught on fire. Images of the burning Cuyahoga shocked a nation, and it led one Wisconsin Senator the following year to organize the first Earth Day to call attention to the dangers of ignoring our environment.

In the four decades since, we've made remarkable progress. Today, our air and water are cleaner, pollution's been greatly reduced, and Americans everywhere are living in a healthier environment. We've passed the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and founded the Environmental Protection Agency. And in Cleveland, the Cuyahoga River is cleaner than it's been in 100 years.

But the true story of the environmental movement is not about the laws that have been passed. It's about the citizens who've come together time and time again to demand cleaner air, healthier drinking water, and safer food and who've demanded that their representatives in government hold polluters accountable.

That progress continues today, as individuals and entrepreneurs across the country help lay the foundation for a clean energy economy one solar panel or smart meter and energy-efficient home at a time.

Since taking office, my administration's been a partner in the fight for a healthier environment. Through the Recovery Act, we've invested in clean energy and clean water infrastructure across the country. We're taking the necessary steps to keep our children safe and hold polluters accountable. And we've rejected the notion that we have to choose between creating jobs and a healthy environment, because we know that the economy of the 21st century will be built on infrastructure powered by clean energy.

But even though we've made significant progress, there is much more to do. And as we continue to tackle our environmental challenges, it's clear that change won't come from Washington alone. It will come from Americans across the country who take steps in their own homes and their own communities to make that change happen.

That's why, as we get ready to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, I want to leave you with a challenge. I want you to take action in your home or your community, at your school or your business, to improve our environment. It can be as simple as riding the bus or the subway to work, making your home more energy efficient, or organizing your neighbors to clean up a nearby park.

Just go to [whitehouse.gov/earthday](http://whitehouse.gov/earthday) to learn how you can help. And then tell us your story about what you're doing to make a difference.

In the end, it's people like you, the small-business owners and community leaders, the teachers and the students, the young people and the grandparents, who've made Earth Day so successful. And it's going to be up to you to make an even bigger difference over the next 40 years.

So let's get to work. Together, we can continue to make progress towards a cleaner environment and a healthier planet.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 5:55 p.m. on March 19 in the Green Room at the White House for later broadcast.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Earth Day, 40th anniversary, videotaped remarks.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Subjects:* Earth Day; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Energy : Alternative energy products and technologies, U.S. production; Energy : Energy-efficient homes and buildings; Energy : Smart meters for homes and commercial buildings; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Environment : Air quality, improvement efforts; Environment : Clean Air Act; Environment : Clean Water Act; Environment : Pollution, prevention and cleanup efforts; Environment : Water :: Quality.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201000254.